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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

FIELD MEMORANDUM SCS # 1090

Re: Investigations Policy

(Supersedes SCS Manual
23701 (1) first sentence)

May 12, 1943

TO ALL RANKING FIELD OFFICERS:

The responsibility for conducting or directing the conduct of all types of investigations concerned with violations by Service employees of Federal laws, Departmental regulations, and Service instructions formerly rested in the Division of Personnel Management in Washington, and this function has been discharged by the Section of Investigations in that Division.

In Field Memorandum SCS #1061 and SCS Manual 12202, however, responsibility for direction of field activities is vested in the regional office. Accordingly, since the issuance of that memorandum, responsibility for the direction of necessary investigations within each region has rested in the Regional Division of Personnel Management. The Washington Office is responsible for the formulation of policies and the development of standards and conducts investigations that involve more than one region or that are, in the opinion of the Regional Conservator, of such serious or special nature as to require Washington assistance.

Heretofore investigations work has been almost entirely concerned with the finding of employee irregularities, their investigation, and eventual recommendation of penalties. And, future investigations work must continue to deal with these matters, since in any organization the size of the Soil Conservation Service violations of laws, rules, and regulations are bound to occur and must be promptly and properly dealt with. Proper methods of conducting such investigations are prescribed in the Service Manual and in various memoranda.

Analysis of cases investigated in past years, however, points clearly to the fact that a substantial number of investigations might well have been avoided if personnel had been properly informed and were familiar with what they could do and could not do under the laws, rules, and regulations bearing on their normal duties. Violations have often been technical; that is, not wilful in character but arising through misunderstanding or ignorance. In addition, if supervisors had taken immediate steps to correct minor infractions of regulations, severe disciplinary action might have been unnecessary later on.



In view of these considerations the objectives of the investigations phases of Service work are as follows:

1. To disseminate information designed to eliminate, insofar as possible, conditions that may result in irregularities or misconduct.
2. To conduct necessary investigations of violations of laws, rules, or regulations on the part of Service employees and to recommend appropriate disciplinary action.

In the absence of personnel in the Regional Investigations Section or Unit, it shall be the responsibility of the Regional Personnel Officer to see that these objectives are reached. Close coordination of all phases of personnel management will be required to reduce the number of investigations and the severity of necessary penalties imposed.

Supervisory personnel in all offices shall report promptly to the Regional Personnel Officer any violations of laws, rules, or regulations, so that he may assist them in dealing constructively with such problems.

The Washington Section of Investigations has been assisting the regions in personnel problems relating to investigative matters and will continue to provide assistance and guidance in preventing and prosecuting investigations and in determining recommendations and disposition of cases.

It is believed that if all Service personnel work toward these objectives, this will do much to establish a better understanding of the obligations and responsibilities incident to Federal employment, to prevent injustices, and to develop better relations among Service personnel.

R. J. Leavenworth
Chief